CLAIMS

We claim.

1. 1.   A method for integrated event tracking of an electronic
2. escrow transaction, comprising:
3.   receiving an instruction from a purchaser, via a network,
4. to effect an electronic escrow transaction associated with a
5. sale, made via the network, of goods or services from a seller;
6.   directing at least one network communication with each of
7. the   purchaser,   the   seller   and   at   least   one   financial
8. institution in effecting the electronic escrow transaction; and
9.   storing a log of each communication, including the
10. instruction, associated with the electronic escrow transaction

1. 2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2.   initiating a debit from an account associated with the
3. purchaser;
4.   storing an indication of the initiation of the debit from
5. the purchaser account;
6.   initiating a credit to an account associated with the
7. seller; and
8.   storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to
9. the seller account.

1. 3.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2.   initiating a debit from an account associated with a
3. processing agent; and
4.   storing an indication of the initiation of the debit from
5. the processing agent account.

1. 4.   The method of claim 3, further comprising:
2.   initiating a credit to an account associated with the
3. seller; and
4.   storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to
5. the seller account;

6   wherein the credit to the seller account is a
7   corresponding credit to the debit from the processing agent
8   account.

1   5.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2   transmitting a notice, via the network, to the seller that
3   funds from an account associated with the purchaser are
4   available and that the seller should ship the goods to, or
5   provide the service for, the purchaser; and
6   storing an indication that the notice has been transmitted
7   to the seller.

1   6.   The method of claim 5, wherein:
2   the notice is transmitted after at least one of (i) a
3   predetermined period, beginning at initiation of a debit to an
4   account associated with a purchaser, has elapsed, or (ii) funds
5   from the purchaser account are credited to an account
6   associated with a service provider.

1   7.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2   receiving, via the network, a first notice of one of (i)
3   the goods having been shipped, or (ii) the services having been
4   performed;
5   storing an indication that the first notice has been
6   received;
7   transmitting a second notice, via the network, to the
8   purchaser that the seller has one of (i) shipped the goods to
9   the purchaser, or (ii) performed the services for the
10   purchaser; and
11   storing an indication that the second notice has been
12   transmitted to the purchaser;
13   wherein the first notice is received from at least one of
14   (i) a shipping agent, or (ii) the seller.

1   8.   The method of claim 7, wherein the first notice includes a
2   delivery tracking number.

1 9.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the

3 goods having been received from the seller and being

4 acceptable, or (ii) the services having been acceptably

5 performed by the seller; and

6   storing an indication that the notice has been received;

7   wherein the notice is received from at least one of (i)

8 the seller, (ii) a shipping agent, or (iii) the purchaser.

1 10.   The method of claim 9, further comprising:

2   initiating a credit to an account associated with the

3 seller; and

4   storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to

5 the seller account;

6   wherein the credit to the seller account is initiated

7 subsequent to receiving the notice.

1 11.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the

3 goods having been shipped by the seller, or (ii) the services

4 having been performed by the seller;

5   initiating a credit to an account associated with the

6 seller;

7   storing an indication that the notice has been received;

8 and

9   storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to

10 the seller account;

11   wherein the credit to the seller account is initiated

12 after a predetermined period, beginning at receipt of the

13 notice; and

14   wherein the notice is received from at least one of (i)

15 the seller, or (ii) a shipping agent.

1 12.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the

3 goods having been received from the seller and being
4 unacceptable, (ii) the goods having not been received from the
5 seller, (iii) the services having not been acceptably performed
6 by the seller, or (iv) the services having not been performed
7 by the seller; and
8   storing an indication that the notice has been received.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the notice includes a
2 notice to suspend a pending credit to an account associated
3 with   the   seller

1 14. The method of claim 12, wherein the notice includes a
2 notice to reverse a debit to an account associated with the
3 purchaser.

1 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2   receiving, via the network, a first notice that the goods
3 have been returned shipped to the seller;
4   storing an indication that the first notice has been
5 received;
6   transmitting to the seller, via the network, a second
7 notice that the goods have been returned shipped from the
8 purchaser; and
9   storing an indication that the second notice has been
10 transmitted to the seller;
11   wherein the first notice is received from at least one of
12 (i) the purchaser, or (ii) a shipping agent.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the first notice includes
2 a delivery tracking number.

1 17. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
2   receiving, via the network, a third notice that the goods
3 have been received by the seller; and
4   storing an indication that the third notice has been
5 received;

6   wherein the third notice is received from at least one of
7   (i) the seller, or (ii) the shipping agent.

1   18.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2   initiating a credit to an account associated with the
3   purchaser; and
4   storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to
5   the purchaser account;
6   wherein the credit to the purchaser account is initiated
7   at after least one of (i) upon receipt of a notice, via the
8   network from at least one of the seller or a shipping agent,
9   that the goods have been delivered to the seller, or (ii) after
10   a predetermined period, beginning at a notification to the
11   seller that the purchaser has shipped the goods to the seller,
12   has elapsed.

1   19.   The method of claim 1, wherein the goods or services are
2   goods or services purchased from an Internet auction.

1   20.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2   initiating a debit from an account associated with the
3   purchaser;
4   initiating a credit to an escrow account associated with a
5   processing agent;
6   initiating a debit to the escrow account associated with
7   the processing agent;
8   initiating a credit to an account associated with the
9   seller;
10   storing an indication of the initiation of the debit to
11   the purchaser account; and
12   storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to
13   the seller account.

1   21.   The method of claim 20, wherein the credit to the escrow
2   account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the
3   purchaser account.

1   22.   The method of claim 20, wherein the credit to the seller
2   account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the escrow
3   account.

1   23.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2   receiving   the   instruction   via   a   web   page   generated
3   subsequent to the purchaser selecting a hyper-link presented to
4   the   purchaser   by   an   Internet   web   site   selling   goods   or
5   services;
6   wherein the web page presented to the purchaser includes
7   details of the sale.

1   24.   The   method   of   claim   1,   wherein   the   stored   logged
2   communications include an indication of the date and time each
3   communication is received or transmitted.

1   25.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2   retrieving any of the logged and stored communications.

1   26.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2   receiving,   from a shipping agent, a first notice that
3   goods have been delivered to the purchaser;
4   storing   an   indication   that   the   first   notice   has   been
5   received;
6   receiving, from the purchaser, a second notice that the
7   delivered goods are acceptable;
8   storing   an   indication   that   the   second   notice   has   been
9   received; and
10   initiating a credit to an account associated with the
11   seller.

1   27.   The method of claim 26, wherein:
2   the credit to the account associated with the seller is
3   initiated after at least one of (i) a predetermined period,
4   beginning upon receipt of the first notice, has elapsed, or

5   (ii) receipt of the second notice.

1   28. A system for integrated event tracking of an electronic
2   escrow transaction, comprising:
3   a communications port configured to receive and to
4   transmit information via a network;
5   a processor in communication with the communications port
6   and configured to direct at least one network communication
7   with each of a purchaser, a seller and at least one financial
8   institution in effecting an electronic escrow transaction
9   arising out of a sale of goods or services made via a network,
10 and to log and store each communication associated with the
11 electronic escrow transaction; and
12   a memory in communication with the processor and
13 configured to store the logged communications.

1   29. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2   configured to:
3   receive an instruction from the purchaser, via network
4   communication, to effect the electronic escrow transaction; and
5   store an indication of the received instruction in the
6   memory.

1   30. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2   configured to:
3   initiate a debit from an account associated with the
4   purchaser;
5   store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
6   debit from the purchaser account;
7   initiate a credit to an account associated with the
8   seller; and
9   store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
10 credit to the seller account.

1   31. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2   configured to:

3   initiate a debit from an account associated with a
4   processing agent; and
5   store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
6   debit from the processing agent account.

1   32.   The system of claim 31, wherein:
2   the processor is further configured to initiate a credit
3   to an account associated with the seller and store an
4   indication in the memory of the initiation of the credit to the
5   seller account; and
6   the credit to the seller account is a corresponding credit
7   to the debit from the processing agent account.

1   33.   The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2   configured to:
3   transmit a notice, via network communication, to the
4   seller that funds from an account associated with the purchaser
5   are available and that the seller should ship the goods to, or
6   provide the service for, the purchaser; and
7   store an indication in the memory that the notice has been
8   transmitted to the seller.

1   34.   The system of claim 33, wherein the notice is transmitted
2   after at least one of (i) a predetermined period, beginning at
3   initiation of a debit to an account associated with the
4   purchaser, has elapsed, or (ii) funds from the purchaser
5   account are credited to an account associated with a processing
6   agent.

1   35.   The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2   configured to:
3   receive, via network communication, a first notice of (i)
4   the goods having been shipped to the purchaser, or (ii) the
5   services having been performed for the purchaser;
6   store in the memory an indication that the first notice
7   has been received;

8   transmit a second notice, via network communication, to
9   the purchaser that the seller has one of (i) shipped the goods
10 to the purchaser, or (ii) performed the services for the
11 purchaser; and
12   store in the memory an indication that the second notice
13 has been transmitted to the purchaser.

1   36. The system of claim 35, wherein the first notice includes
2   a delivery tracking number.

1   37. The system of claim 35, wherein the first notice is
2   transmitted by at least one of (i) the seller, or (ii) a
3   shipping agent.

1   38. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2   configured to:
3   receive, via network communication from at least one of
4   the purchaser, the seller, and a shipping agent, a notice of
5   one of (i) the goods having been received from the seller and
6   being acceptable, or (ii) the services having been acceptably
7   performed by the seller; and
8   store in the memory an indication that the notice has been
9   received.

1   39. The system of claim 38, wherein:
2   the processor is further configured to initiate a credit
3   to an account associated with the seller and store an
4   indication in the memory of the initiation of the credit to the
5   seller account; and
6   the credit to the seller account is initiated subsequent
7   to receiving the notice.

1   40. The system of claim 28, wherein:
2   the processor is further configured to receive, via
3   network communication, a notice of (i) the goods having been

4   shipped by the seller, or (ii) the services having been

5   performed by the seller, initiate a credit to an account

6   associated with the seller, store an indication in the memory

7   of the initiation of the credit to the seller account;

8   the credit to the seller account is initiated after a

9   predetermined period, beginning at receipt of the notice; and

10   the notice is received from at least one of (i) the

11   seller, or (ii) a shipping agent.

1   41. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2   configured to:
3   receive, via network communication, a notice of one of (i)
4   the goods having been received from the seller and being
5   unacceptable, (ii) the goods having not been received from the
6   seller, (iii) the services having not been acceptably performed
7   by the seller, or (iv) the services having not been performed
8   by the seller; and
9   store in the memory an indication that the notice has been
10   received.

1   42. The system of claim 41, wherein the notice includes a
2   notice to suspend a pending credit to an account associated
3   with the seller.

1   43. The system of claim 41, wherein the notice includes a
2   notice to reverse a debit to an account associated with the
3   purchaser.

1   44. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2   configured to:
3   receive, via network communication from at least one of
4   the purchaser or a shipping agent, a first notice that the
5   goods have been returned shipped to the seller;
6   store in the memory an indication that the first notice

7   has been received;

8   transmit to the seller, via network communication, a

9   second notice that the goods have been returned shipped from

10   the purchaser; and

11   store in the memory an indication that the second notice

12   has been transmitted to the seller.

1   45.   The system of claim 44, wherein the first notice includes

2   a delivery tracking number.

1   46.   The system of claim 44, wherein the processor is further

2   configured to:

3   receive, via network communication from at least one of

4   the seller or a shipping agent, a third notice that the goods

5   have been received by the seller; and

6   store in the memory an indication that the third notice

7   has been received.

1   47.   The system of claim 28, wherein:

2   the processor is further configured to initiate a credit

3   to an account associated with the purchaser and store in the

4   memory an indication of the initiation of the credit to the

5   purchaser account; and

6   the credit to the purchaser account is initiated after at

7   least one of (i) receipt of a notice, via network communication

8   from a least one of the seller or a shipping agent, that the

9   goods have been returned to the seller by the purchaser and

10   accepted by the seller, or (ii) a predetermined period,

11   beginning at a notification to the seller that the purchaser

12   has shipped the goods to the seller, has elapsed.

1   48.   The system of claim 28, wherein the goods or services are

2   goods or services purchased from an internet auction.

1   49.   The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further

2   configured to:

3   initiate a debit from an account associated with the
4   purchaser;
5   initiate a credit to an escrow account associated with a
6   processing agent;
7   initiate a debit to the escrow account associated with the
8   processing agent;
9   initiate a credit to an account associated with the
10 seller;
11   store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
12 debit to the purchaser account; and
13   store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
14 credit to the seller account.

1   50.   The system of claim 49, wherein the credit to the escrow
2   account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the
3   purchaser account.

1   51.   The system of claim 49, wherein the credit to the seller
2   account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the escrow
3   account.

1   52.   The system of claim 28, wherein:
2   the communications port is further configured to receive
3   an instruction, via a web page generated subsequent to the
4   purchaser selecting a hyper-link presented to the purchaser by
5   an Internet web site selling goods or services, to direct
6   execution of an electronic escrow transaction for a sale
7   transaction; and
8   the web page presented to the purchaser includes details
9   of the purchase made from the internet web site.

1   53.   The system of claim 28, wherein the stored logged
2   communications include an indication of the date and time of
3   each communication's direction or receipt.

1   54.   The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2   configured to retrieve any of the stored communications from
3   the memory.

1   55.   The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2   configured to (i) receive, from a shipping agent, a first
3   notice that goods have been delivered to the purchaser, (ii)
4   store in the memory an indication that the first notice has
5   been received, (iii) receive, from the purchaser, a second
6   notice that the delivered goods are acceptable, (iv) store in
7   the memory an indication that the second notice has been
8   received, and (v) initiate a credit to an account associated
9   with the seller.

1   56.   The system of claim 55, wherein the credit to the seller
2   account is initiated after at least one of (i) a predetermined
3   period, beginning upon receipt of the first notice, has
4   elapsed, or (ii) receipt of the second notice.

1   57.   An article of manufacture for integrated event tracking of
2   an electronic escrow transaction, the article of manufacture
3   comprising:
4   a computer readable medium; and
5   computer programming stored on the medium;
6   wherein the stored computer programming is configured to
7   be readable from the computer readable medium by a computer to
8   thereby cause the computer to operate so as to:
9   receive an instruction from a purchaser, via a network, to
10 effect an electronic escrow transaction associated with a sale,
11 made via the network, of goods or services from a seller;
12   direct at least one network communication with each of the
13 purchaser, the seller and at least one financial institution in
14 effecting the electronic escrow transaction; and
15   store a log of each communication associated with the
16 electronic escrow transaction in a memory.
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